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## MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM SPONSORS

FROM: Katherine Stewart, Consultant  
Office of Child Nutrition and School Health

SUBJECT: HealthierUS School Challenge

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The USDA has announced "The HealthierUS School Challenge" for the 2006 school year. The Challenge is a USDA initiative that will recognize those concerned schools that have already taken steps to improve their school nutrition environment and will encourage other schools to follow their lead.

### *Healthier***US** Schools

HealthierUS Schools can be certified as either Silver or Gold Team Nutrition Schools, according to standards established by FNS. Ultimately, FNS would like to see all schools take the challenge:

Go for the Silver! Go for the Gold!



## ☆How Does It Work?



**Schools must meet a basic set of criteria.** To be certified, a school must:

- Be an elementary school
- Be enrolled as a Team Nutrition School
- Offer reimbursable lunches that demonstrate healthy menu planning practices and principles of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and that meet USDA nutrition standards
- Provide nutrition education to students
- Provide students the opportunity for physical activity
- **Maintain an Average Daily Participation of 70 percent or higher** of school enrollment for reimbursable lunches
- Adhere to guidelines established by FNS for foods served/sold in schools outside the National School Lunch Program.

The application may be obtained at the HealthierUS link: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/HealthierUS/index.htm>

## HealthierUS School Challenge Application Submission Procedures

### School Review Panel

The local school review panel must review the required documentation and review and sign the self-assessment tool. Both the self-assessment tool and the instructions or criteria describe in detail the required documentation. In brief, the following documentation is required:

- 1) A copy of the prior month's menus (demonstrating meeting the menu criteria described in the instructions for either Silver or Gold certification);
- 2) A description of the school's nutrition education activities;
- 3) A description of the school's opportunities for students' physical activity; and
- 4) The school's ADP for October.

No documentation needs to be submitted for criteria #7, Foods or Beverages sold other than in school meals but the school is advised to maintain documentation of these food and beverage items on file at the school during the 2-year certification period in case of review by the State agency and/or FNS.

After certification and signatures of the local school review panel, the self-assessment tool and the required documentation is submitted to the State agency.

### State Agency

The State agency will review the school application package and certify the following:

- 1) The school is enrolled in Team Nutrition (if not enrolled in Team Nutrition, the school may complete an enrollment form and include it with the HealthierUS School Challenge application);
- 2) AN SMI review of the school's SFA has been completed within the preceding five years, and the SFA has completed all improvement activities agreed to in the last SMI corrective action plan;
- 3) The submitted school menus meet the Silver or Gold certification standards;
- 4) The school has adequately described their nutrition education activities and opportunities for physical activity;
- 5) The school's reported ADP is accurate; and
- 6) The local school review panel has certified that any foods or beverages sold a la carte and in vending machines, school stores, etc. meet either the Silver or Gold certification.

Once the State agency feels the school has met the criteria or standards, the State Child Nutrition Director signs the self-assessment form and forwards it with the required documentation to their FNSRO. (The documentation must follow the signed self-assessment tool.)

### **FNS Regional Office**

The FNSRO will review the documentation and self-assessment tool to be sure the documentation is complete and/or identify any concerns they might have with the documentation. (If the assessment tool and/or documentation are not complete, do not forward to Team Nutrition.)

The RO Child Nutrition Director then signs the application (assessment tool) and both the self-assessment tool and documentation are forwarded to Team Nutrition for processing.

### **Team Nutrition**

Team Nutrition will:

- 1) Certify that the school is enrolled in Team Nutrition;
- 2) Check for required signatures and documentation;
- 3) Print and mail a HealthierUS School Challenge certificate to the school; and
- 4) Enter the school into the HealthierUS School Challenge database on the Team Nutrition website.